United Nations S/2015/465

Security Council

Distr.: General
30 June 2015
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 22 June 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period from 3 March to 28 May 2015 (S/2015/405):

- The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that it is committed to its obligations under the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and has accordingly respected the mandate of UNDOF and facilitated its work in every way. For over four decades, for as long as Israel has occupied the Syrian Golan, the Government has cooperated and coordinated closely and fully with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDOF command.

- The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic again stresses that the occupied Syrian Golan is an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. UNDOF is therefore present on a temporary basis until such a time as Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan comes to an end and Israel withdraws from the entire occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 497 (1981).

- Israel, however, has refused to implement United Nations resolutions requiring it to withdraw from the entire occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, and has continued to violate the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement, the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions. The most recent of those violations, mentioned in paragraph 3 of the report, was the deployment on 24 April 2015 of a missile-launching unit in the 10 km zone of the area of limitation, approximately 5 km north-west of Camp Ziouani, and the firing of four missiles, one of which was observed crossing the Alpha line. That is not to mention Israel's refusal to allow UNDOF to complete its investigation into Israeli claims about four terrorists carrying heavy equipment who had crossed the Alpha line on 26 April 2015.

- In the course of the crisis in Syria, Israel has added a new chapter to the annals of its racist and terrorist acts by providing direct logistical support to armed terrorist groups, which are using the area of separation as a haven now that UNDOF forces have withdrawn from their positions after some of their troops were abducted by those groups. The Secretary-General's reports, including the

Please recycle

report under consideration, have confirmed that Israel is providing direct logistical support and assistance to terrorist groups, including transporting approximately 2,000 injured terrorists across the line of separation to Israeli hospitals for treatment and then returning them to Syria across that same line to resume their terrorist activities. The Security Council must shoulder its responsibilities under its own resolutions, including those relating to counter-terrorism, and take immediate measures against Israel and the other States that are supporting and financing those terrorist groups, as well as those States that are providing them with safe haven. Turning a blind eye to the risks posed by the presence of those groups in the area of separation will only exacerbate instability there and throughout the region, in addition to putting the security and safety of United Nations personnel at risk.

- Mindful of its obligations, Syria has exercised the utmost restraint in responding to the activities of armed terrorist groups in the UNDOF area of operation. It understands the nature of the region and the obligations that are in force. It reiterates that the actions of Syrian law enforcement forces are a response to an emergency situation arising from exceptional circumstances, namely the terrorist activities of terrorist groups in the area of separation. Several paragraphs of the Secretary-General's report confirm that armed terrorist groups have launched violent attacks using advanced weaponry, tanks, heavy artillery, mortar shells and missiles. The actions of Syrian law enforcement forces in the area of separation are the very least that the Syrian Government can do in response to appeals from the local population. The latter has borne the brunt of the terrorists' operations, which have also been directed against UNDOF and its personnel. The Secretary-General's reports have documented more than one instance in which terrorist groups attacked UNDOF personnel and sites, and stole Force vehicles for use in terrorist operations. According to paragraph 9 of the report under consideration, the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade terrorist group had kidnapped and detained UNDOF peacekeepers in the area of separation on two occasions in early 2013, while the Nusrah Front had kidnapped and detained 45 UNDOF peacekeepers between 28 August and 11 September 2014. Those crimes were committed with the direct assistance of the Israeli occupation forces, as well as the intelligence agencies of Arab States and States of the region and beyond, the identities of which are well known to all.

- Given the preceding, it is hardly sufficient to call, as does paragraph 29 of the report, on countries with influence to strongly and urgently convey to the armed groups in the UNDOF area of operation the need to cease any actions in violation of the Disengagement Agreement between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic that jeopardize the safety and security of United Nations personnel. The Security Council must shoulder its responsibilities and address without delay this grave situation with the seriousness and attention it deserves. Thus far, the relevant United Nations Secretariat officials have unjustifiably ignored the warnings and information provided to them by the Syrian Government over the past few years. The Security Council must take immediate deterrent measures against those States that are known to support armed terrorist groups, including the Nusrah Front, in order to drive those groups from the area of separation.

- The Syrian Government stresses that the camps on the ceasefire line referred to in the report, which are purportedly intended for humanitarian purposes, are in fact logistical bases for armed terrorist groups to smuggle ammunition and weapons from occupied territory into Syria.

- The Syrian Government again stresses that UNDOF must continue to fulfil its mandate within the context of Security Council resolutions and the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. Syria undertakes to continue supporting UNDOF as it has done over the years, taking into account the points made above, so that UNDOF personnel can return to their positions in the area of separation securely and in cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government, after that area has been purged of armed terrorist groups. That outcome would enable the Force to fulfil its mandate as prescribed. Accordingly, Syria is continuing to provide various kinds of support and facilities to UNDOF, so as to enable the Force to reinforce its positions and return gradually to the area of separation. In that regard, a parcel of land has been set aside for the expansion of position 12, and another parcel of land with an area of approximately 40 dunums has also been set aside to build a logistical base in Qatana.

- The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic again emphasizes the need to address the fundamental reason for the presence of UNDOF in the region, namely, the continuing Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan. The Security Council must take immediate action to end the Israeli occupation of the occupied Syrian Golan in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981), and to compel Israel to withdraw fully from the Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic
to United Nations